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EMERGENCY OPERATIVE CASE

DEAR EDITOR: The November number of the JOURNAL contains an article by Alice Jane Drew, "Emergency Operative Case," in which she tells of arriving at a home and having only three hours in which to prepare for an operation; one necessitating the opening of the abdominal cavity. She speaks of having the furniture all removed from the room designed for the operating room, the pictures taken from the walls and walls wiped down, also having the rug or rugs removed. I would suggest that there would have been far less danger of infection from the dust by leaving it undisturbed on the furniture, pictures, walls and under rugs, than by starting innumerable particles of dust circulating in the air of the room through the removal of the furniture, pictures, rugs and wiping down of walls.

We know that it takes many hours for the settling of impalpable dust. Had Miss Drew had from twelve to twenty-four hours for her preparation, then her method would have been ideal, but having less time than twelve hours, it is certainly safer and therefore correct to leave pictures and walls untouched and to cover all furniture with sheets, except such as chairs and other small pieces that can be easily lifted and carried from the room. The rugs also should be covered with sheets to confine the dust, and with newspapers for further protection, the already bare portions of the floor being washed.

In view of the fact that Miss Drew's patient made such splendid recovery this criticism may seem unnecessary, but another time such agitation of dust, with no opportunity for its settling again before the operation, might prove detrimental, hence my wish to call the attention of the readers of the JOURNAL to this mistake, which reads so beautifully.

FRANCES SHOUSE. R. N.

Missouri.

LETTERS FROM NAVY NURSES

II.

DEAR EDITOR: I think I said we were pioneer nurses in Guam, but in reality our work is the finishing touch to a sound foundation laid by the naval medical officers. When the Islands were "taken over" from the Spaniards, an epidemic of typhoid was depleting the inhabitants. This condition was inevitable as sanitation was unknown; pigs, chickens, dogs and children disputed for territory in the street; the creeks were wells, wash tubs, bathing pools and, to some extent, sewers. The governor is a U. S. naval officer and this means that cleanliness is given her proper place. One of his first commands, written in court language and posted in the market place, banished the pigs from the highway. This order was followed by a loud protest, and a lengthy document, signed with representative names, was submitted requesting that the order be repealed. The august official was obdurate and the pigs were banished. The next order controlled the freedom of the hens and instituted garbage receptacles, to be anchored, else they became the playthings of the dogs. Sanitary water closets were to be built and a model was exhibited at the Health Office, sixty days being allowed for the installation. Each command called forth a signed protesting document. The Chamorros are a gentle, obedient people, however, and are learning that all these commands make for health and prosperity. The district and visiting nurses of our country have far less reward than comes from teaching these natives. And thus we are beginning our work with comparatively up-to-date conditions among an obedient people willing to be taught.